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ABSTRACT

Teachers are critical to the success of school-to-work systems. They play a key role in the effort to prepare students for further education and work. In order to carry out these new tasks, however, teachers need more professional development. Teacher internships are an innovative professional development strategy that can help educators fulfill these new and often unfamiliar roles in school-to-work systems. Teacher internships place educators in the workplace so that they can experience first hand the skills, abilities, and knowledge that their students will need to be successful at work. Employers also benefit from the skills that teachers bring to the workplace. This relationship between teachers and employers enhances the school-to-work curriculum development and implementation. Strategies to develop teacher internship programs include the following; (1) providing a range of options; (2) recruiting teachers; (3) recruiting employers; (4) securing funding; (5) determining teacher compensation; and (6) evaluating teacher internships. Examples of effective practices include The Industry Initiatives for Science and Math Education in San Francisco (California) and a teacher internship program in the Western School District in Jackson, Michigan. (Resources listed include six organizations and five publications.) (KC)

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Teacher Internships in School-to-Work

Teachers are critical to the success of school-to-work systems. From integrating academic and work-based curricula to building collaborative relationships with employers and other partners in school-to-work systems, teachers play a key role in the effort to prepare students for further education and work. Teacher internships are an innovative professional development strategy that can help educators fulfill these new and often unfamiliar roles in school-to-work systems.

While many professional development opportunities for teachers involve interaction and learning within the academic community, the work-based nature of school-to-work necessitates a greater emphasis on learning activities that occur in the workplace. Teacher internships place educators in the workplace so that they can experience, first-hand, the skills, abilities, and knowledge that their students will need to be successful at work. In these temporary work placements, teachers gain a greater understanding of the practical applications of classroom concepts and an appreciation of the learning potential of work-based activities for students. Taken back to the school, these experiences encourage teachers to enhance instructional strategies and incorporate applied academics into a work-based curriculum.

Teachers benefit from an increased knowledge of both occupation-specific and general workplace requirements. Most teacher internships occur in a business or career area that is related to the teacher's area of instruction. Through internships, teachers can deepen their subject area knowledge through experience-based learning, and develop applications for use in the classroom. Working directly with employers can help educators observe and develop workplace readiness skills, such as working in teams, that they can then incorporate with their students. With their experience in a particular career area, teachers can help advise students about the skills and knowledge necessary in that career. In addition to industry or career related knowledge, teachers are able to observe general workplace competencies, such as the SCANS skills, and incorporate them into classroom instruction. Finally, in many teacher internships, teachers can gain graduate credit for their workplace experiences.

Employers also benefit from teacher internships. Teachers bring a variety of skills to the workplace that can boost productivity. Their external opinion can bring an unbiased viewpoint to planning, implementation, and evaluation of workplace practices, and encourage "out-of-the-box" thinking. For example, some teachers have worked with human resource departments to develop skills assessments for prospective employees. In other cases, employers have found teachers' research skills valuable in developing and analyzing customer surveys and the marketing of products.

Teacher internships are not simply isolated components of a school-to-work initiative. Working directly with employers can give educators insight into the business viewpoint. Conversely, employers can become more connected with education. By physically frequenting a workplace, teachers and employers build a relationship and forge channels of communication. The most obvious follow-up after completing an internship is to incorporate newly learned material into the students' curriculum. Another option resulting from strengthened channels of communication is the possibility of engaging the employer in classroom activities. Employers may begin to host students from the class as interns, while the teacher prepares a complementary curriculum. This foundation of communication between the teacher and employer may result in the employer's, as well as the teacher's, expanded involvement in the governance of system-wide school-to-work activities. Likewise, hosting teachers as interns may help employers to see the relevance of becoming more involved in the development of school curriculum, in addition to having already developed a personal contact to facilitate this process.

This bulletin presents a number of strategies to develop teacher internship programs. It then provides

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examples of effective practices and lists resources that can provide additional information and assistance in developing and expanding teacher internship programs in school-to-work initiatives.

Strategies

Providing a Range of Options. Providing both teachers and employers with a range of opportunities may result in increased participation. The intensity and nature of teacher internships depend upon the specific resources available in local labor markets and the goals of both the teacher and the employer. While a number of teacher internships take place during the school year, the majority of internships take place during the summer. The length of a teacher internship ranges from a one-day job shadowing experience to a summer-long experience that includes formal training and work on specific projects in the workplace. Teachers and employers are often encouraged to develop project-based internships together, in which a product--such as a school-based activity, a resource kit, or an analysis--is the end result of the teacher's efforts.

Recruiting Teachers. When school administrators, employers, or school-to-work coordinators recruit teachers for internships, they must emphasize the benefits of internships to the teachers. The message to teachers should highlight the internship as a unique opportunity to bring back and share with students the work-based knowledge they have gained through the internship. Many school-to-work systems have used staff meetings and other district or school-wide activities to inform teachers and encourage their participation. The information presented to teachers in these sessions should include goals of the internship, the application process, compensation, potential for graduate credit, timelines for application, screening, training, and placement. Participating employers and teachers from ongoing teacher internship programs are especially useful in recruiting additional teachers. Compensation, an important component of attracting teachers, is discussed below.

Recruiting Employers. Recruiting employers to participate in teacher internship programs should be part of a comprehensive employer recruitment plan that also includes identifying work-based learning opportunities for students. Coordination of efforts to place both students and teachers in the workplace can reduce duplication and improve the experience of employers who participate. Practitioners have found that the articulation of the benefits of participation to employers, both from an altruistic and competitive perspective, can encourage their participation. Finding a spokesperson, or "champion" within the employer community is another effective way to build a network of participating employers. Developing ongoing personal contacts with employers may secure support, along with mass mailings and other publicity efforts.

Securing Funding. A variety of funding options are available to enable teachers to acquire work-based learning experiences. Funds from the school district staff development budget; allocations from School-to-Work Opportunities, Perkins, or JTPA monies; and contributions and grants from foundations and participating businesses can be used to support teacher internships. Ideally, both the participating employer and the school district or school-to-work partnership contribute to financing the teacher internship program. Financial commitments from the schools can take the form of payment of teachers' wages in the workplace or providing substitute teachers and release time for the teachers if the program takes place during the school year. Employers may be more motivated to ensure that an internship maintains high quality and achieves positive results when they are investing in it.

Determining Teacher Compensation. Most internship programs provide compensation to teachers for their work outside of the classroom. Some programs establish a single pay rate for all teachers, while others use a combination of factors, such as the teacher's experience or the nature of the workplace experience, to determine compensation. Compensation should be competitive with other employment opportunities available to teachers, such as teaching summer school.

Evaluating Teacher Internships. In order to engage employers, teachers, and school administrators, school-to-work systems need evidence of the effectiveness of teacher internships. A comprehensive evaluation is the most effective way to provide evidence of the benefits of teacher internships. Evaluations should include at least one meeting during the internship to evaluate progress and a

post-internship evaluation by both the employer and the teacher. These evaluations should measure both the internship itself and outcomes of the experience. Evaluation of teacher internships should be part of a comprehensive, systematic evaluation of all school-to-work activities to maintain focus on goals and promote continuous improvement of results and products.

Effective Practices

The Industry Initiatives for Science and Math Education (IISME) program coordinates eight-week summer internships where teachers work on projects alongside job mentors. The program places approximately 75 teachers in internships that are in primarily math and science-related internships throughout seven counties in the San Francisco Bay Area. At the end of the internships, teachers formulate an action plan to introduce their newly gained knowledge and experience into their classrooms and schools. Peer coaches, who are graduates of the program, spend time with teachers throughout the process, helping teachers to develop their action plans and later ensuring that these plans are implemented feasibly and innovatively. IISME emphasizes the importance of outcomes and ongoing collaboration through workshops, academies, field trips, and other activities that continue throughout the school year. Teachers are allowed to repeat their participation in the internship program because IISME has found that after their first internship, teachers tend to implement classroom-oriented action plans like curriculum modification or field trips. However, after a second internship, teachers often implement school-wide action plans.

IISME recruits employers through a mailing in the fall that is followed up throughout the year. However, word-of-mouth is one of the primary methods of securing employer involvement. Companies often participate due to a desire to improve the quality of education within their local schools or to strengthen local partnerships. IISME has gained a core constituency of employers who write the teacher internships into their budget each year. Teachers are recruited through a mass mailing to schools, local agencies, and math and science-oriented associations. After teachers apply for internships, employers are able to select which teachers they feel are most appropriately suited to their program, similar to a hiring process. Employers devise a project which they feel can be completed by the teacher within eight weeks; these employers have reported that teachers were often able to exceed expectations and expand their roles.

IISME is funded through grants from local businesses, community agencies, the National Science Foundation, and other sources. IISME devotes a large portion of its time to this grant-writing process. Companies pay teachers' stipends, payroll costs, and a fee to IISME. Graduates of the internship program can apply to IISME for mini-grants to implement action plans within their schools. Positive feedback, in-school innovations, and the continued involvement of all parties demonstrate the valuable gains the IISME teacher internship program offers to its participants.

The Western School District in Jackson, MI, operates a teacher internship program as part of its school-to-work initiative. Currently, more than 60 percent of the teachers in the school district have participated. The school-to-work coordinator for the program acts as a broker, handling teachers' applications and working out logistics. Teachers spend one day in a local company, often working to complete a specific project. At the end of the day, businesspeople and teachers spend time debriefing and discussing what was learned through the internship. School administrators then help ensure that the teachers' learning experiences are incorporated into the program. Teachers participate in internships in a number of career clusters, but primarily in the manufacturing industry, which comprises 70 percent of the area's businesses.

The program originated when manufacturing companies approached the education sector, wanting to inform teachers, students and parents about what skills are needed to be successful in the workplace. Businesses, therefore, have been a major contributor to the program's funding. At the beginning of the year, the program requests donations of $100-$500 from companies, though participating companies are not obligated to contribute This fund is then used to finance substitute teachers' salaries while teachers are participating in the program. The externship coordinator, who also coordinates other school-to-work activities, is paid a salary through grant monies.

As found in many other teacher internship programs, recruiting teachers was initially a challenge in Western School District. However, "talking in the teacher's lounge" and allowing time for reflection and discussion enabled interest in the program to spread by word-of-mouth. This gradual process also helped to ensure the development of more broad-based support for school reform. The program's coordinator has found the most important component to ensuring the program's success is communication on a personal level, whether it be among coordinator and participants, teachers and businesspeople, or between teachers.

Teachers who have served in one-day internships are often eager to participate in a six-week summer teacher internship program coordinated by the Chamber of Commerce and the Spring Arbor Community College. In this more involved program, teachers are responsible for completing a project with their company, as well as developing lesson plans and revising curriculum. After receiving start-up funding from a grant from the National Center for Manufacturing Sciences, the program has now become financially self-sustainable. Businesses pay a fee of $3000 per teacher intern. Two thousand dollars of this money is paid to teachers as a stipend, while the remaining $1000 is used to support the administrative costs of the program. In addition to operating on a tight budget, recruiting teachers has been one of the greatest challenges of the program. However, businesses are eager to participate in the program because they can make a contribution to education in the community, and still receive a return on their investment through the completion of a teacher project. They sometimes prefer to host teachers as interns, before students, because they feel teacher internships will result in more systemic changes. Relationships between the school system and industry have been strengthened through these extended teacher internships. Many students later perform internships or pursue employment with their teacher's former employer. The interaction of these two programs demonstrates how one-day internships and more intensive teacher internship programs can support and strengthen one another through coexistence.

Effective Practices

Industry Initiatives for Science and Math Education (IISME): Laura Horvac, c/o Deskin Research Group, 2270 Agnew Road, Santa Clara, CA 95054 (408) 496-5431.

Western School District: Kim Norton, Woodville Community Center, 3950 Catherine Street, Jackson, MI 49203 (517) 750-9155 knorton@voyager.net.

Organizations

Center on Education and Work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison has undertaken a number of projects relating to the professional development of teachers in school-to-work systems. 964 Educational Sciences Building, 1025 West Johnson Street, Madison, WI 53706 (608) 263-4367 http://www.cew.wisc.edu/ aphelps@soemadison.wisc.edu.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) provides research and development assistance to education, government, community agencies, business, and labor. NWREL's primary service area is the Northwest states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. 101 Southwest Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97204 (503) 275-9599 http://www.nwrel.org bakera@nwrel.org.

Real World Mathematics, sponsored by New Visions for Public Schools in New York, New York, provides internships for approximately 50 middle and high school math teachers. The program strives to support teachers in learning math applications in the workplace and integrating these examples into their curriculum. 96 Morton Street, 6th floor, New York, NY 10014 (212) 645-5110 http://www.newvisions.org jvasquez@newvisions.org.

Teachers in the Workplace strives to enhance student learning by providing teachers with

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project-related experience in the workplace and other work-based projects. Business Economics Education Foundation, 123 N. 3rd Street, Suite 504, Minneapolis, MN 55401-1664 (612) 337-5252.

Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education provides information on teacher internships and has developed the Scientific Work Experience Program for Teachers (SWEPT) initiative, a national network that offers guidance material and technical assistance to help community partnerships sponsor teachers in the workplace. 5112 Berwyn Road, 3rd Floor, College Park, MD 20740 (301) 220-0870 http:\\www.triangle-coalition.org ortmanj@aol.com.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, a National Center for Research in Vocational Education grant site, has conducted case studies of professional development in school-to-work systems that include teacher internship programs. 112 Lane Hall, Blacksburg, VA 24061 (540) 231-5982 http:\\ncrve.berkeley.edu.

Publications

Finch, Curtis, B. June Schmidt, and Margaret Moore. *Conducting Successful School-to-Work Transition Programs: Teacher Expertise and Professional Development Needs.* Blacksburg, VA: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Career and Occupational Studies, Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, 1995.

Industry Initiatives for Science and Math Education. *Directory of Scientific Work Experience Programs for Teachers.* Santa Clara, CA: Industry Initiatives for Science and Math Education, 1996.

Kids And the Power of Work. *Teacher Externship Programs.* New York: National Child Labor Committee, 1995.

Morales, Dionisia. *Going into Business: Teachers Learning in the Community.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1997.

Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education. *SWEPT: Providing Scientific Work Experiences for Teachers.* College Park, MD: Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education, 1995.

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